

Kansas Department of Labor

Podcast Episode 4: State Extended Benefits

Hello there and welcome to *Questions from Claimants*, the podcast about all things unemployment. Each episode we'll speak with unemployment experts from the Kansas Department of Labor to help answer your questions about your benefits. I'm your host Jonathan Larence.

In this episode we're talking about State Extended Benefits or EB. To get your questions answered I spoke with Kathy Toelkes, Director of Communications for the Kansas Department of Labor.

Jonathan: Kathy thanks for joining us.

Kathy: You're welcome

Jonathan: Now Kathy, what are State Extended Benefits?

Well, State Extended Benefits are available during periods of high employment and they're available on a state by state basis. They become available once the state's average, seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate has hit 6.5 percent or more for three consecutive months and the program provides up to an 13 additional weeks of benefits.

Jonathan: Now when can I receive the State Extended Benefits?

You'll need to exhaust all of your regular state unemployment benefits and any of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation or EUC benefits that are available before you can apply to receive State Extended Benefits.

Jonathan: So I would have to go through Tier I, Tier II and Tier III to be eligible for the State Extended Benefits.

Kathy: Yes, now you would. There are some individuals who became eligible for the state Extended Benefits before the Tier III program was implemented so they may have already received their State Extended Benefits and then went on to receive Tier III, but in most cases you will complete all of EUC Tiers before applying for State Extended Benefits.

Jonathan: Ok, to qualify for Extended Benefits do I have to fill out any additional paperwork?

Kathy: Yes, there is a separate paper application that must be completed and sent back in to the Kansas Department of Labor in order to apply for these benefits and that application will be mailed to you as you exhaust your existing EUC benefits.

Jonathan: Will I receive some sort of different amount – benefit amount – on the Extended Benefits?

Kathy: Well your weekly benefit amount for the State Extended Benefits should be the same as your weekly benefit amount for your regular unemployment benefits, but your total benefit amount will be different and that's because you'll receive fewer weeks on the State Extended Benefit program than you did on the regular unemployment benefit program. So your total benefit amount is going to be either 50 percent of your total benefit amount under your regular unemployment benefits or 13 times your weekly benefit amount from your regular unemployment benefits, whichever is less.

Jonathan: Can I still get that extra \$25 weekly benefit if I'm receiving the Extended Benefits?

Kathy: Well there is a cutoff date by which you have to establish your claim in order to receive the \$25 supplemental benefit and if you're able to establish your claim for State Extended Benefits prior to that cutoff date you'll continue receiving that additional amount. Right now that cutoff date is by the week

ending April 3. You'll continue to receive the \$25 weekly benefit amount. There is the potential that deadline will be extended, but for right now that's where the cutoff stands.

Jonathan: I know that I have to file my weekly claim each week, but with Extended Benefits will I need to fill out anything else each week?

Kathy: There is an additional work search requirement under the State Extended Benefits program that may require you to file additional information for each week that you claim within that program. So when you apply for State Extended Benefits, there will be a determination made as to whether or not your prospects for finding employment within a reasonable time period are good or not good. So, if it is determined that your prospects are good then your work search requirements will be the same as they were when you were receiving your regular state unemployment benefits.

But if the determination is that your prospects are not good, then you'll be required to conduct what is called a systematic and sustained work search effort and what that means is you're going to be required to document work search activities for each day of the week, Monday through Friday. And to be clear, that doesn't mean five work search activities that week, it means you must have at least one work search activity each one of those days. Those activities could include contacts with employers' in-person, by mail, on the phone or online, but at least one contact a week must be in person. If you're required to conduct a systematic and sustained work search effort then KDOL is going to mail to you supplemental forms that you'll need to complete to document those work search activities and each week that you file for benefits you'll need to send in that supplementary form.

Jonathan: Just to make sure, so I am having to fill out these sustained work search forms and I have to fill them out Monday thru Friday. So I need to have a minimum of five things each week on that form? Is that correct?

Kathy: Well, it's not enough to just have five things. For instance, if you have an activity you document for Monday, you have two activities you document for Tuesday, no activities on Wednesday and then one activity each Thursday and Friday, that won't be sufficient because you didn't have any activities on Wednesday. You must have an activity each day of the week.

Jonathan: What kind of documentation of my work-search effort will I be required to provide?

Kathy: On the forms that you are provided you'll be asked for information about the actions that you took to look for work each day, Monday through Friday. You will need to provide the dates that you looked for work, as well as the name, address and phone number of the employers you contacted. You'll need to indicate how that contact was made, whether it was in-person, whether you mailed them a résumé contacted them by phone or online. We'll need the name of the person contacted, as well as the employers' name, address and phone number. You'll need to indicate the type of work that you applied for as well as the result of your efforts.

Jonathan: What if I haven't met the systematic and sustained work search requirements one week?

Kathy: Well if you know you haven't met those requirements for the week, either there was a day you didn't have any activity or if you know you have not met that requirement, then probably the best thing to do that week is not to file a claim that week. That's because if you file for that week and you have not met the work search requirements then we will have to disqualify you from receiving further State Extended Benefits, and not just for that one week that you claimed, but you'll be disqualified from receiving those benefits until you have become reemployed, have worked at least four weeks, earning at least four times your weekly benefit amount.

Jonathan: So just to reiterate, in order to qualify for State Extended Benefits one must first exhaust their regular benefits, as well as their Tier I, Tier II and their Tier III benefits?

Kathy: That's correct and if you should ever be confused about how you progress from one benefit program to the next or what that progression looks like, we do have a diagram on our Web site – www.GetKansasBenefits.com – that shows the progression of the various benefit programs.

Jonathan: Kathy, thank you for taking the time to talk with us today.

Kathy: You're welcome.

That's it for this episode of *Questions from Claimants*. Join us next time when our topic will be about what happens when you receive a new year or a quarter change determination notice.

If you have questions about Kansas unemployment process, e-mail us at podcast@dol.ks.gov. For security reasons we can't answer specific questions about your claim, but we may be able to answer general questions in an upcoming episode. Also, remember to go online to www.GetKansasBenefits.com for more information.

I'm Jonathan Larance. Thanks for listening.